493 paid by the chief but still advise him, and retain
495 much of the prestige due to their rank, which is inherited. Others have been interpreted as court assessors though they may not actually take part in the duties. Some now combine both sets of duties and function both as councillors and court assessors. Some of the duties of both sets of officials, however, have been taken over by the court clerk and other court functionaries. Although the position of court assessor was part of the old tribal structure, modern court assessors see themselves as occupying a position in a structure largely of White fashioning. I once heard a court assessor when conducting an enquiry into a case of adultery, cut short the prolixity of a witness saying: "None of these long stories. We are conducting this case according to the customs of the Whites."

More illuminating still is the position that the court clerks occupy in the modern structure. They are differentiated from the vast majority of the population because they are literate. All of them have been educated, usually in a mission school. A high proportion of them are Ngoni because more Ngoni are Christian (hence educated) than Yao (see p. 191). Because he can read and write, the chief court clerk is the medium through which the chief expresses himself in writing and the medium through which he gets written information from the Administration and others. The court clerk is therefore in a unique position of knowing all the business that comes into the chief's head by letter. He, of course, must also write the replies so that he has a very good knowledge of what is going on in the territory. In addition, because of his education and knowledge of the ways of the White people the court clerk often makes a better councillor than the uneducated and naive traditional councillor does. Therefore in certain matters the court clerk, rather than the councillor, is the chief's most important adviser.

493 The various other officials have different
497 functions to perform, frequently of a semi-ceremonial nature. There are sanitary inspectors, well inspectors, etc. The court messenger who is present at the cases now performs many of the